

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of producing a catalyst for use in the production of methacrylic acid, having a composition of the following formula (1), comprising, by subjecting methacrolein to vapor phase catalytic oxidization with molecular oxygen,

wherein, when mixing 100 parts by mass of a solution or a slurry (liquid A)₁ containing molybdenum atoms, phosphorous atoms and vanadium atoms, in which the content of ammonium species is 0 to 1.5 mol relative to 12 mol of the molybdenum atoms, 5 to 300 parts by mass of a solution or a slurry (liquid B)₁ containing 6 to 17 mol of ammonium species relative to 12 mol of the molybdenum atoms contained in the solution A₁ and a solution or a slurry (liquid C)₁ containing an element Z, the liquid B is mixed with the liquid A, the liquid C or a mixture of the liquid A and the liquid C over a period of 0.1 to 15 minutes:



wherein ~~in which~~ P, Mo, V, Cu and O represent phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper and oxygen, respectively[[],]; X represents at least one element selected from the group consisting of antimony, bismuth, arsenic, germanium, zirconium, tellurium, silver, selenium, silicon, tungsten and boron[[],]; Y represents at least one element selected from the group consisting of iron, zinc, chromium, magnesium, tantalum, cobalt, manganese, barium, gadolinium, cerium and lanthanum[[],]; Z represents at least one element selected from the group consisting of potassium, rubidium and cesium[[],]; a, b, c, d, e, f, g and h represent an atomic ratio of each element, and when b=12, a=0.5 to 3, c=0.01 to 3, d=0.01 to 2, e=0 to 3, f=0 to 3

and $g=0.01$ to 3, and h represents an atomic ratio of oxygen necessary for satisfying the valence of each of the above-mentioned components.

Claim 2 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein 5 to 100 parts by mass of the liquid C is mixed with the liquid A, the liquid B or a mixture of the liquid A and the liquid B over 0.1 to 30 minutes.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the liquid B is a solution or a slurry which contains substantially no phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper, element X, element Y or element Z.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the liquid C is a solution or a slurry which contains substantially no phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper, element X, element Y or ammonium species.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A catalyst for use in the production of methacrylic acid, which is produced by the method claimed in claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A method of producing methacrylic acid, comprising, subjecting methacrolein to vapor phase catalytic oxidization with molecular oxygen in the presence of the catalyst for producing methacrylic acid as claimed in claim 5.

Claim 7 (New): The method according to claim 2, wherein the liquid B is a solution or a slurry which contains substantially no phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper, element X, element Y or element Z.

Claim 8 (New): The method according to claim 2, wherein the liquid C is a solution or a slurry which contains substantially no phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper, element X, element Y or ammonium species.

Claim 9 (New): The method according to claim 3, wherein the liquid C is a solution or a slurry which contains substantially no phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper, element X, element Y or ammonium species.

Claim 10 (New): A catalyst for use in the production of methacrylic acid, which is produced by the method claimed in claim 2.

Claim 11 (New): A catalyst for use in the production of methacrylic acid, which is produced by the method claimed in claim 3.

Claim 12 (New): A catalyst for use in the production of methacrylic acid, which is produced by the method claimed in claim 4.

Claim 13 (New): A method of producing methacrylic acid, comprising, subjecting methacrolein to vapor phase catalytic oxidization with molecular oxygen in the presence of the catalyst for producing methacrylic acid as claimed in claim 10.

Claim 14 (New): A method of producing methacrylic acid, comprising, subjecting methacrolein to vapor phase catalytic oxidization with molecular oxygen in the presence of the catalyst for producing methacrylic acid as claimed in claim 11.

Claim 15 (New): A method of producing methacrylic acid, comprising, subjecting methacrolein to vapor phase catalytic oxidization with molecular oxygen in the presence of the catalyst for producing methacrylic acid as claimed in claim 12.